

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7467

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3325

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MY RP

SUBJECT: TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN'S VIEWS ON PHILIPPINE MOSLEM
PROBLEM

1. I WENT TO SEE FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN JULY 9 ON A CALL LONG DELAYED BECAUSE OF HIS FREQUENT ABSENCES FROM KUALA LUMPUR AND MALAYSIA ON ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK MATTERS. THE OLD GENTLEMAN WAS IN FINE FETTL AND THOUGH HE COMPLAINED OF HARDSHIPS OF LIVING IN "THAT GOD-FORSAKEN DESERT," THE AUSTERITY OF LIVING IN SAUDI ARABIA APPEARS TO HAVE TRIMMED OFF SOME WEIGHT AND HE LOOKS IN BETTER HEALTH THAN LAST TIME I SAW HIM IN 1967.

2. THE CONVERSATION, AS WE POLISHED OFF A HALF DOZEN DURIANS, WAS PRINCIPALLY REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY '60'S. HOWEVER, TOWARDS THE END OF THE CALL THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES CAME UP.

3. TUNKU SAID THAT DURING MACAPAGAL'S TIME, THE MALAYSIANS AND SAUDIS HAD OFFERED TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MOSQUE IN MANILA. A SITE WAS SELECTED AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY BEGUN WHEN, ACCORDING TO THE TUNKU,
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THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY TOLD THE CHRISTIAN OWNER OF THE

LAND THAT HE WOULD BE EXCOMMUNICATED IF HE SOLD THE LAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MOSQUE. MACAPAGAL REFUSED TO INTERVENE AND THE PROJECT ABORTED. TUNKU ALSO SAID THAT FILIPINO MOSLEMS HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR A MOSLEM CEMETARY IN MANILA. THESE TWO EXAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT-TOLERATED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FILIPINO MOSLEMS LOOM LARGE IN THE MINDS OF MALAYSIANS, HE SAID, AS EVIDENCE OF LACK OF SINCERITY OF FILIPINO CHRISTIANS IN DEALING WITH THEIR MOSLEM COMPATRIOTS.

4. FOR MANILA: IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER HAS AN ANTI-FILIPINO BIAS DERIVING FROM DEALINGS WITH MACAPAGAL IN THE EARLY STAGES OF CONFRONTATION AND HIS GENERAL DISTASTE FOR FILIPINO STYLE. I HAVE, HOWEVER, HEARD THESE ACCUSATIONS IN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FORM FROM OTHER MALAYSIANS. WITH NO INTENTION OF GETTING IN THE MIDDLE, I WOULD LIKE TO BE IN A POSITION TO DENY THESE REPORTS IF THEY ARE NOT TRUE.
UNDERHILL

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NNN

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